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Student: **Michael Higley-Vance**

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**EL7003-8**

**Dr. Linda Collins**

**Instructional Design and Engaging E-Learning Activities**

**Activity # 1: SWOT Analysis and Matrix**

**Comments:** Glad to be back. I still have 3 weeks left in my Statistics class but I think I'll make it!

**Faculty Use Only**

Hi, Michael, so great to work with you again! Thanks for including the SWOT rubric and the analysis, this will be important information as you work toward your next assignment. Dr. Collins

Dr. Linda D. Collins    6.9    2.9    December 24, 2013

Literacy in the Content: A SWOT Analysis

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### Literacy in the Content: A SWOT Analysis

Educational and global institutions from around the world are increasingly using technology for teaching and training. Over the past decade there has been an increased interest in integrating electronic platforms as teaching environments (Skyler, 2009). Various forms of e-Learning now exist, from presenting online content and testing asynchronously to synchronous instructor-led sessions, many forms of online learning and training are being embraced by these institutions (Skyler, 2009; Lane, 2013). While it seems the move towards e-Learning is seen by these institutions as unavoidable, it is important to understand and evaluate possible factors that help determine the success of e-Learning course activities. To help ensure an online course will be successfully designed, created, and implemented a strategy known as the SWOT analysis is employed to guide in its development (Gautam, 2011, April 11). In addition to the SWOT analysis, the purpose of this paper is to identify and describe a learning course while addressing the following considerations: (a) the example technologies that will be used, (b) a look at internal and external forces related to the course, and (c) the student demographics and support systems currently available to help design, create, and implement the course content and activities.

### **SWOT**

The SWOT technique is a strategic analysis tool used to identify and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in creating an online learning course. The SWOT technique can be typically represented as a two-by-two matrix, such that combinations of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, at different levels, create different considerations that influence outcomes (Gautam, 2011; Zhang & Goel, 2011). Strengths and weaknesses are identified as internal considerations while opportunities and threats relate to external environmental considerations that either help or impede the achievement of the

expected outcome. Hence, strengths and weaknesses are considered factors internal to student participation and opportunities and threats are factors external to the students.

The primary idea for using a SWOT analysis is to identify a main objective, or desired end state of the course design. The desired outcomes of the literacy course would be successful development, adoption, and implementation by online learners. Evidence supporting these expected outcomes would be successful implantation of the online literacy course and improved student proficiency in content literacy.

### SWOT Matrix

	Positives	Negatives
	Strengths	Weaknesses
Internal Factors	<p>At Kenwood Middle School these factors are well established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Development Offerings</li> <li>• Technology Support Staff</li> <li>• Literacy Specialists</li> <li>• District Support</li> <li>• Race to the Top Funding</li> <li>• Faculty of Innovators</li> </ul>	<p>At Kenwood Middle School these factors need more consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Certification</li> <li>• Teacher Motivation</li> <li>• Student Population Economically Disadvantaged</li> <li>• Student/Parent Buy-In</li> <li>• Overall Course Training</li> </ul>
	Opportunities	Threats
External Factors	<p>At Kenwood Middle School these factors are possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved Student Literacy</li> <li>• Improved Student Overall Achievement</li> <li>• Life-Long Learners</li> <li>• College &amp; Career Ready</li> <li>• District &amp; State Recognition</li> </ul>	<p>At Kenwood Middle School these factors should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Parent Involvement &amp; Support</li> <li>• District &amp; Community Financial Support</li> <li>• Inconsistent &amp; Unreliable Technology</li> <li>• Teacher Commitment to Quality, Fidelity, Intensity, &amp; Consistency to the Course</li> </ul>

Figure 1. Planning matrix using SWOT model.

### **Course Selection and Design**

Selecting a course to develop and implement in an online learning environment can be difficult depending on the knowledge and experience of the course designer. Many online courses can be designed from simple pre-made templates or designed fully from scratch. Most online course designers prefer a rapid e-Learning approach while other course designers prefer a constructivist approach, which includes collaborative work, reflective practices, and skills acquisition (Santally, Rajabalee, & Cooshna-Naik, 2012). However, to make an online course that is interactive and engaging, the designer must possess background knowledge sufficient to support the content, pedagogy, and online course development (Lane, 2013).

### **Course Selection**

One of the areas of learning proficiency that have shown to be a constant challenge in education has been content literacy (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Many school systems have focused on literacy in reading and writing, however those efforts are typically traditional in nature and continue to fail time and time again due to the lack of content integration (Hyslop, 2010 May). According to Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) literacy is “commonly thought of as a basic set of skills, widely adaptable and applicable to all kinds of texts and reading situations” (p. 40). The skill of reading and writing doesn’t improve over time without curriculum integration, in-depth practice, rigor, and relevance.

Researchers have shown that one of the most reliable ways to help students improve literacy skills is through rigorous and relevant activities that motivate and engage students in the learning process (Daggett, 2005; Hyslop, 2010). According to Lane (2013) a 2011 study indicated that enrollment in online classes had increased 10% while traditional college enrollments only had an increase of 2%. Researchers have also shown that information and

communications technology can be used to motivate and engage students across several content areas. As technologies continue to gain popularity, technologies for learning and communication will continue to shape how people learn, interact, and read, while at the same time, improve literacy skills. Students must be able to read, comprehend, analyze and communicate at a rigorous and high level in order to be career and college ready (Lane, 2013).

### **Online Learning Considerations**

Teaching models and frameworks for learning have begun to evolve over time, as they are partly influenced by the rapid change in the way information and communication technologies are being developed (Santally et al., 2012). Learning styles have also shown to have an influence on student outcomes, which must be considered when developing an online course (Moallem, 2007). Learning models supported by research, such as constructivism and social-cultural models, must also be considered when developing an online course in order to ensure effective and valid student learning (Gaspay, Dardan, & Legorreta, 2008; Santally et al., 2012).

**Learning style.** Research conducted by Moallem (2007) indicated a positive influence on student achievement when the learning style was matched with the preferred instructional style. It was found that learners retained information longer, applied learned information more effectively, and harbored positive attitudes toward the course content than those who were not matched (Moallem, 2007). Although some researchers argue that learning style is not an influencing factor in course design it is critical that a variety of technologies and strategies be embedded into the course in order to address the learner's internal and external factors.

**A blended approach.** Constructivism supports active and reflective teaching and learning processes. Constructivists also believe that knowledge is largely obtained through full

immersion and active engagement in the course curriculum and activities (Gaspay, et al., 2008).

The socio-cultural model states instruction should be delivered in multiple forms. Additionally, researchers have concluded that social interaction and collaboration fosters self-motivated learning. Student satisfaction, perceived skill development, and self-reported learning help improve student's perceived learning and measure of effectiveness (Gaspay, et al., 2008).

Learning models ultimately define learning effectiveness; therefore to embrace a model for the use of teaching and learning online requires blending learning models and pedagogies with innovative technologies. Common measures of effectiveness can be measured by considering internal and external forces within the blended model (Zhang & Goel, 2011). Some examples are student grades, retention rates, learning environment satisfaction, perceived flexibility, learner control, attitudes, improved technology, student-teacher interaction, and self-efficacy (Santally, et al., 2012).

### **e-Learning Technologies**

According to Santally, Rajabalee and Cooshna-Naik (2012) educational researchers and practitioners alike claim that the potential for learning using new technologies is likely to be found in the way in which these technologies are used as tools for teaching and learning. Therefore, it makes sense to consider the variety of technology uses as it aides with best practices and promotes improved literacy.

**Currently available technology.** Students in elementary schools usually work on Mac computers, while the resources in the middle and high schools are typically Dell PCs. Software is provided and integrated within the classroom curriculum to help develop computer literacy at an early stage. Model classrooms are also found in most schools, with expansion planned as budgets allow. Model classrooms usually consist of a document camera, an overhead projector,

lanyard microphones for instruction, and an audio/video system. In some districts students are provided a district supported email address to help facilitate communication and collaboration. Teachers are provided support and training to make optimal use of classroom technology for efficient classroom teaching and learning.

**Newly adopted technology.** The design of this literacy course will include technology that has both traditional and authentic uses and incorporate a variety of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning activities. Examples of technology and teaching strategies that will be used to aid in the teaching and learning are the Internet, face-to-face (F2F) instruction and tutoring, group videoconferencing for classroom instruction or tutoring, e-mail, student discussion boards, online chat, word processing, and power point. Additionally, web2.0 applications such as a web-based learning environment, online assisted student-to-student collaboration, and web-based media for teacher and student presentations will be utilized to enhance and support learning.

### **Technology Support**

On going technology support will be a necessity for the design and implementation of an online literacy course. Technology equipment, Internet access, tools, resources, training, and a technology infrastructure will have to be maintained and replaced as new technology becomes available. Technology support staff will need to be employed to maintain technology equipment and support teachers with various technology issues. This will take a financial commitment from schools across Tennessee and school districts will need to establish a technology budget, which can support and maintain an online literacy initiative.

### **Course Rationale**

According to Kevin Huffman, Tennessee's Department of Education Commissioner, overall scores increased for the majority of districts in almost every subject, showing major gains, particularly in STEM. In a recent 2013 report by the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), Tennessee students are the number one fastest improving in the nation. Following the implementation of Race to the Top, Tennessee has seen three consecutive years of overall growth on the TCAP (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Practice). However, with the state's implementation of Race to the Top came a commitment to Common Core Standards and an adoption of a new standardized assessment tool called PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). These initiatives are slotted for full implementation beginning August 2014 and with it a sense of urgency among school officials across the state to stay focused on the skills learners need to become college and career ready.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper a SWOT technique was used to select an online course that will be developed as outlined in the Instructional Design and Engaging E-Learning Activities course currently enrolled. Internal and external factors were also considered in determining the potential online course. Improving literacy was selected for course development because it is vast becoming a requirement for schools in Tennessee attempting to prepare high school seniors to be college and career ready by graduation.

Technology has influenced literacy instruction by transitioning and evolving traditional models of teaching and learning literacy to a more authentic online learning experience (Holum, 2001; Gaspay, Dardan, & Legorreta, 2008; Santally et al., 2012). Creating an online literacy course supports this transition in education and is supported heavily by the research (Daggett,

2005; Hyslop, 2010; Lane, 2013). As information and communication technologies continue to gain popularity they will continue to shape how people learn, interact, and read.

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